



CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Energy for Displaced People: A Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement

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Supported by:



Background of the initiative

In January 2018 in Berlin, UN agencies, donors, civil society groups and the private sector came together to take the first steps to develop a Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement to ensure that displaced populations are fully included in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7). The vision is that **“every person affected by conflict or natural disaster has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services by 2030”**.

While achieving SDG 7 relies on countries' policies, plans and programmes, and will be led by countries for their citizens, displaced people are not an explicit part of these plans and tend to be neglected. Often, they live in isolated areas or informal settlements alongside communities who are sometimes left-behind in development planning and less likely to be a priority. Refugees, for example, are non-nationals and if they are able to return to their homes, they often remain in fragile and post conflict or disaster situations. Therefore, the participants called on all stakeholders for collective efforts to support achieving SDG 7 for displaced people. The foundations of these efforts will be the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement (GPA), which will be launched during the High-Level Political Forum in July 2018 (HLPF).

Energy As a Priority Area for Humanitarian Response

'Thriving, and not just surviving' requires sustainable energy. Without energy, families cannot cook their food, heat and light their homes, or power their businesses. Communities cannot power their health centres, schools or public spaces. Currently humanitarian assistance relies heavily on fossil fuels to enable efficient and rapid delivery of essential services to the communities in need and for powering premises in remote locations.

The world is facing the highest level of displacement on record with 65.6 million people displaced by conflict or crisis (UNCHR, 2017). In addition, disasters displace three times more people than conflicts: an average of 26.4 million people per year have been displaced from their homes by disasters since 2008 (IDMC, 2017), a trend likely to continue with climate change.

Of the displaced people who are living in camp settings, around 90% are without electricity access and 80% rely on solid fuels for cooking. During humanitarian crises, access to safe, reliable, and clean energy for crisis-affected people can be difficult to achieve. With funding shortages and inadequate policies to support the humanitarian community in providing sustainable and clean energy, current energy practices are often inefficient, polluting, unsafe for the users, and harmful to the surrounding environment.

Considering energy needs during response can have a positive impact on aid efficiency on the mid- and longer term: by reducing expenses related to high costs of diesel fuel, more financial resources will be available to spend on protection and immediate assistance. In addition, the long-term health and environmental impacts of polluting fuel sources on displaced people, which reduce the resilience of communities and hamper progress, could be solved with the systematic deployment of renewable energy. Without access to sustainable energy the options for building programmes focused on self-reliance of communities and improving livelihoods are limited.

While it is challenging to integrate sustainable energy at the start of humanitarian programming, it is possible to a certain extent. Energy planning tools, technical guidelines, business models, and procedures already exist to support humanitarian assistance in delivering suitable energy. Working in partnership across humanitarian and development organisations is critical to delivering this.

Energy Enables

Sustainable energy is also vital in supporting the implementation of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) and underpins the core pillars of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#).

I Reception and admission

Electricity is required to power reception centres and during emergency responses. Sustainable energy products such as solar lamps are included in the emergency provisions provided to displaced people during crises to enhance quality of life.

II Support for immediate and ongoing needs

Sustainable energy is needed for homes, schools, and businesses to enable people to live dignified and productive lives.

III Support for host countries and communities

Sustainable energy services in camps can reduce the environmental and resource burden on host governments and local communities and support their national and regional development plans.

IV Durable solutions

Affordable electricity is necessary for businesses and access to sustainable energy enables livelihood opportunities. Activities around energy can be combined by training and capacity building activities to provide know how which can be used for a living after resettlement or repatriation.

Global Plan of Action

A high level political document advocating the need for a Global Plan of Action will be launched at the [High Level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) on sustainable development in July 2018, during the review of Sustainable Development Goal 7. To support this, a working-level roadmap is currently being developed to serve as the base for an effective Global Plan of Action. This roadmap is based on series of key actions as identified through the working groups initiated in Berlin and will contain targets and indicators to serve as a concrete guideline at the practitioner level. Actions for these five working groups are outlined below.



To conduct these efforts, a steering group of leading organizations has been established to support humanitarian organizations and their partners in delivering priorities on gender and diversity, protection, gender-based violence (GBV), and environmental sustainability – all through the lens of improved and sustainable energy provision.

The Global Plan of Action steering group welcomes organizations who were unable to attend the conference into the community, and is happy to brief anyone on the progress of the plan. Please indicate your interest in joining the initiative working groups by emailing energy@unitar.org. Actions for the five working groups are outlined below.

The case for change is clear. The delegates of the Berlin Conference agreed to collaborate to deliver the vision that: *Every person affected by conflict or natural disaster has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services by 2030*. While the people of concern are at the front and center of our efforts, there is also the infrastructure and operations side of humanitarian response.

For that, the Vision for the system is: *“The share of renewable energy in the humanitarian relief system is increased substantially and energy efficiency in humanitarian operations is improved.”*

To achieve these overall visions, concrete actions in five key areas will be necessary.



Coordination and Planning

Vision

is vital to ensuring that [no displaced people are left behind](#) in the provision of energy assistance, as well as for the long-term improvement of energy programming through knowledge sharing, learning, and increased collaboration between actors. To be effective, planning and coordination mechanisms must directly engage key decision-makers and staff at all levels. Crucially, displaced people and host communities must be included in the design and implementation of energy programs to ensure that their needs and priorities are reflected.

Policy and Advocacy

Vision

efforts are needed at global, national and agency levels to address energy challenges in humanitarian settings. At an international multilateral level, this means explicitly recognizing the issue of sustainable energy for displaced people in global policy agendas. At national host country level, this means showing where sustainable energy solutions can contribute to national and local sustainable development objectives and facilitate the relevant aid and investment. At agency level, it means incorporating energy considerations and best practice into core programming.

Actions

- Undertake stakeholder mapping to identify and define relevant actors engaged in providing energy assistance to displaced people. Consider establishment of a formal, global humanitarian energy coordination body that institutionalizes energy planning. Assess the potential for (or identify the existence of) similar bodies at the national, and/or settlement levels in key countries.
- Identify key gaps in communication among and within organizations working in this sector and develop solutions to address them -- e.g. improving communication from field staff.
- Facilitate improved program planning by working with the Data, Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation group to develop specific tools to identify energy needs and assess impact.
- Collaborate with the Policy and Advocacy group to develop a set of commonly-recognized principles, frameworks, and procedures for energy interventions in displacement settings, and/or incorporate energy into existing procedural frameworks (e.g. Sphere).

Actions

- Advocate for humanitarian standards to include energy.
- Work directly with governments and local leaders to gain their support and engagement on the inclusion of energy in displacement settings and to embed change.
- Produce position papers and evidence synthesis on climate solutions, renewable energy technologies, new business models and modes of financing for humanitarian energy.
- Align development partner plans with national priorities and work directly with host government ministries to ensure sustainable energy programmes.

Innovative Finance

Vision

approaches must be explored to support the design and delivery of sustainable energy solutions across the humanitarian sector. There is a need to bolster finance for long term sustainable infrastructure and renewable investments, as well as support humanitarian agencies to incorporate energy programming into their budgets, address energy needs in acute emergencies, and shift to more environmentally sustainable modes of delivery.

Technical Expertise and Capacity Building

Vision

will prioritize awareness raising, training and capacity building in operational agencies to ensure high quality and well-coordinated field programs. There is a need to holistically outline the specific training and capacity needs of stakeholders across the value chain so user appropriate training methods can be delivered. To better ensure technology adoption, the end user capacity and energy needs are vital to understand. The skills and capacities of displaced people will be utilised to ensure that they have an active role in future energy interventions, ensure they have appropriate technical knowledge to enable delivery, and create jobs and livelihood opportunities for both displaced people and host communities.

Actions

- Collect and analyse innovative business models that have potential for upscaling activities.
- Demonstrate successful commercial business models, and share experience of results based financing to access markets.
- Research and policy institutions to develop reports and new tools on infrastructure financing, procurement and risk templates, service models and economic incentives.
- Set up a task force to identify viable business models for economic incentives for private sector, including pay-as-you-go technologies for solar electricity and cooking solutions.
- Develop methods and concrete actions how private companies, NGOs and research organisations could support humanitarian organisations on learning and capacity building for using new financing and investment processes.

Actions

- Build technical capacity in humanitarian response, through toolkits, partnering with private sector energy solutions or staffing technical energy experts in situations of displacement, to enable efficient use of resources, and ensure relevant stakeholders have the appropriate technical knowledge at their level appropriately deliver of sustainable energy.
- Enable bottom-up community solutions by co-designing training and materials with local communities to ensure appropriate process and content.
- Develop tools and training programmes specifically on humanitarian energy to increase awareness and improve technical skills considering the sustainability of such programmes.
- Holistically identify technical expertise, capacity building and training gaps and conduct stakeholder mapping to fill the gaps with appropriate training and capacity building solutions.
- Collect best practices that demonstrate successful implementation and adoption of renewable energy technologies in humanitarian settings for lasting impact.

Data, Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation

Vision

Information about energy needs and interventions must be high-quality, accurate and relevant for users to ensure programs are reducing energy poverty and the associated protection costs. Relevant data should ideally be collected in every program, utilizing existing mobile platform tools when possible, and integrated into humanitarian response. Non-personalized data should be digitally shared openly between stakeholders. Where possible data should be harmonised and standardised to enable comparison and to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation.

We encourage the sharing of this exciting initiative with your organizations and networks. If you would like to be notified about major developments relating to the Global Plan of Action or join the working groups in the formation of the Global Plan of Action, please contact: energy@unitar.org. For further information, please visit the conference webpage.

Actions

- Increase primary data on humanitarian energy available, concretely by applying for research and data funding to develop impact measurements, quantitative data sets, evidence on gender, energy and protection, and effective monitoring and evaluation tools.
- Coordinate and share existing data more effectively by creating a mailing list and an online data sharing forum through use of EnergyCop, Energypedia, OCHA HDX, UNHCR's forthcoming open data platform for monitoring of energy programs, or other resources.
- Develop common indicators and metrics for energy for displacement: humanitarian agencies and academia to work together to reform systems and deliver best-practice models.
- Define a common framework for impact measurement: design tools and indicators to measure progress, impact and quantify how sustainable energy improves lives.
- Encourage open access to data: Draft open access statements and data sharing obligations (where needed) which can be included at the programme design stage and integrated into humanitarian energy terms of reference.
- Create an ontology for data, evidence, monitoring, evaluation and learning in the energy for displacement sector to guide practitioners and researchers in delivering high-quality evidence and align it with already existing data formats.

